

Joint Statement By President Biden and President Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego of Colombia

April 20, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. of the United States and President Gustavo Petro Urrego of the Republic of Colombia met today to advance bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest, including climate change, clean energy transition, migration, drug trafficking, and peace. We reaffirmed the strategic importance of the U.S.-Colombia partnership based on principles of friendship, mutual respect, cultural ties, and a shared commitment to democracy and human rights.

President Biden and President Petro committed to work together to address the challenges of our countries and the region, protect and improve the lives of our citizens, and uphold democratic principles. The United States and Colombia are seeking to adapt their engagement strategies to reflect this new moment in our shared history. The leaders instructed their teams to continue developing new road maps towards progress, so we can respond quickly and effectively to shared challenges.

Combating Climate Change

President Biden and President Petro expressed unwavering commitment to combat the climate crisis, a real threat facing the world, that imposes a collective responsibility demanding immediate action to overcome it and thus protect life on the planet. President Biden applauded President Petro's commitment to protect the Amazon and Colombia's ambitious goal of achieving net-zero deforestation by 2030. The leaders expressed their commitment to work toward an ambitious and productive United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and to work in other international organizations to achieve concrete results that prioritize life and nature. The Amazon is the world's main natural carbon sink and it is essential to the reduction of emissions worldwide. The United States is the largest international supporter of climate action in Colombia with \$87 million in environmental programming provided during the last two years and the President's \$45 million Fiscal Year 2024 budget request to Congress. With Colombia's announcement to allocate US\$200 million during the next twenty years to save and protect the Amazon, the United States and Colombia we committed to work with the international community to mobilize greater climate financing for that purpose.

Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity

President Biden and President Petro discussed the importance of promoting economic and social opportunity in the region as a shared interest. They reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening economic cooperation through the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, in line with mutual priorities to create good jobs across the Western Hemisphere and promote labor rights, environmental sustainability, and economic inclusion.

As part of that effort, the United States and Colombia will work together to promote regional integration. The leaders pledged to establish a working group to advance electrical interconnection in the Americas to help reduce the cost of energy, promote the growth of a regional market for renewable energy, and reduce energy dependence on fossil sources.

Similarly, President Biden and President Petro committed to take measures to accelerate the clean energy transition, decarbonize our economies, and promote renewable energy sources that will allow us to lay the foundations for an inclusive and fair economy.

Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection

President Biden thanked President Petro for Colombia's leadership and example in addressing irregular migration in the Americas. The leaders highlighted the importance of the Los Angeles Declaration as a comprehensive framework for moving forward with concrete solutions, and recognize the changes in demographic trends that explain why certain countries in our hemisphere are significant draws of labor migration. They also underscored our joint commitment to counter human smuggling in the Darien.

Democratic Governance

As the two oldest democracies in the hemisphere, the United States and Colombia recommitted to shared democratic values, including justice and the rule of law, free speech, free assembly, a free press, freedom of religion, and the inherent human rights of all individuals. The leaders affirmed the need to provide for the inclusive participation of the whole of society, the strengthening of institutions and justice, the promotion of women's equality, and the inclusion of historically-excluded ethnic groups such as Afro-Colombians and Indigenous peoples. To that effect, President Biden and President Petro condemned all forms of authoritarianism and aggression in the world, including Russia's violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity contrary to international law, while reiterating the urgent call for a stable and lasting peace. They expressed our shared commitment to support and contribute to the resolution of the situation in Venezuela.

Promotion of Peace

President Biden reiterated his support for President Petro's peace efforts, and for rural and agricultural development in Colombia, as essential to effectively advance the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement in its international accompaniment of the accord's Ethnic Chapter.

Holistic Counternarcotics Strategy

President Biden and President Petro committed to a holistic approach to address the harmful impacts of drug use and drug trafficking on both our peoples' health, safety, the environment, the economy, rule of law, and the strength and transparency of democratic institutions. Under the principle of shared responsibility, we will redouble our efforts in terms of demand reduction through science-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support. Likewise, the leaders instructed their teams to intensify and expand bilateral cooperation in intelligence and interdiction to dismantle the networks, pursue the true owners and enablers of drug trafficking in their jurisdictions, and counter illicit finance.

President Biden expressed the willingness and commitment of the United States to cooperate with Colombia's efforts to transform coca-growing territories, to overcome the conditions of vulnerability of rural, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian communities, allowing for their true insertion in the sustainable development of the country and enhancing their fundamental role in caring for the environment and biodiversity.

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